

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SES-02 SAA-01 SSM-03
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 /095 W
-----124127 061649Z /43

P 061631Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5337
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, IS, AU
SUBJECT: ISRAELI REACTION TO KREISKY STATEMENT

1. THE REACTION IN ISRAEL TO AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR KREISKY'S
VITRIOLIC WEEKEND ATTACK ON ISRAEL IN THE DUTCH NEWS APER
TROUW, IN WHICH HE DESCRIBED PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AS A
"POLITICAL GROCER" AND DESCRIBED ISRAEL AS A SOUTH
AFRICAN-STYLE POLICE STATE, HAS BEEN GREETED HERE WITH
A MIXTURE OF ANGER AND DISGUST. FOREIGN MINISTRY DEPUTY
DIRECTOR GENERAL MOSHE ALLON CALLED IN THE AUSTRIAN CHARGE
AND TOLD HIM "THE INSULTING STYLE OF KREISKY'S REMARKS
WAS UNPARALLELED IN RELATIONS BETWEEN ENLIGHTENED STATES
... CHARACTERIZING THE JEWS WITH SUCH CONCEPTS AS THESE
REMINDS US OF DARK PERIODS, NOT NECESSARILY DISTANT IN
TIME, AND THE IMAGINATION FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT
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THE FACT THAT IS WAS CHANCELLOR KREISKY WHO USED THEM,"
A CLEAR REFERENCE TO KREISKY'S JEWISH BACKGROUND.

2. PRIME MINISTER BEGIN SAID THAT HE VIEWED KREISKY'S
REMARKS WITH "COLD CONTEMPT." NOT TO BE OUTDONE IN THEIR
INDIGNATION, LEADERS OF THE LABOR PARTY, WHICH ONLY TWO
MONTHS AGO HAD TRIUMPHANTLY RECORDED A SIGNIFICANT FOREIGN

POLICY ACCOMPLISHMENT BY SECURING A RELATIVELY PRO-ISRAELI STATEMENT FROM KREISKY DURING PERES' VISIT TO SALZBURG, REACTED WITH EQUAL VIGOR. PERES CALLED KREISKY'S STATEMENTS "VERY GRAVE AND REVOLTING" AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER RABIN SAID THAT, "IF KREISKY REALLY MADE THOSE STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM, HE HAS RULED HIMSELF OUT OF MEDIATING IN THE MIDDLE EAST."

3. PUBLIC REACTION WAS ALSO HARSH, WITH MOST MAJOR ISRAELI DAILIES CARRYING SHARPLY CRITICAL EDITORIALS. ISRAEL'S LEADING POLITICAL CARTOONIST, ZE'EV, IN MA'ARIV, PICTURED KREISKY AS A TREE URINATING ON ITS ROOTS, AND A JERUSALEM POST CARTOON DEPICTED KREISKY IN A SERIES OF FRAMES TURNING INTO A SHADE OF HITLER. BOTH THE PRESIDENT OF THE ISRAEL-AUSTRIA FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION, FORMER LIKUD PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL ELIMELECH RIMALT, AND LEOPOLD GOTTESMAN, AUSTRIA'S HONORARY CONSUL GENERAL IN HAIFA, WHO ASKED US TO INFORM PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AT CAMP DAVID, ANGRILY RESIGNED THEIR POSITIONS.

4. COMMENT: KREISKY HAS LONG BEEN THE SUBJECT OF DEEP SUSPICION AND A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF CONTEMPT IN ISRAEL, BOTH BECAUSE OF HIS PERCEIVED PRO-ARAB STANCE AND HIS OPEN DISSOCIATION FROM HIS JEWISH ORIGINS, ALTHOUGH HIS STANDING HAD RISEN SOMEWHAT AS A RESULT OF THE KREISKY/BRANDT STATEMENT. HIS LATEST OUTBURST, HOWEVER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAS MADE HIS NAME A DIRTY WORD IN ISRAEL AND RABIN IS PROBABLY RIGHT IN SAYING THAT WHATEVER MAY HAVE REMAINED OF HIS ROLE AS A MEDIATOR IS NOW BEYOND REDEMPTION. END COMMENT. VIETS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, SPEECHES, ALLEGATIONS, MILITARY GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV11892
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780363-0056
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780996/aaaadbkf.tel
Line Count: 98
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4e62fa56-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1526053
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAELI REACTION TO KREISKY STATEMENT
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, PINT, IS, AU, (KREISKY, BRUNO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4e62fa56-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014